

### Introduction:

Every day we are faced with choices. Will we get up, what we will wear, what we will eat and so on. We are also faced with bigger choices. What will I do for a living? Who will I marry? Sometimes we choose a pattern of behavior, which then defines a great number of our smaller choices from day to day. Regrettably, few people consider their choices in the greater context of life and consequences. Most go through each day making choices without thinking where they will lead. Then when the consequences stare them in the face, they feel they don't deserve what is happening to them. They want somebody to cover up for them and take the consequences away. Or perhaps they want to blame someone else, when in reality it was their own unwise choices which brought them where they are. If you are ever in this situation, remember Jehoshaphat king of Judah.

### Discussion:

- I. Jehoshaphat was a good man who made some bad choices.
  - A. Jehoshaphat was the best king Judah had had since the reign of David (**II Chronicles 17:3-6**). But he had one area of weakness in which he stumbled several times.
  - B. Jehoshaphat kept making sinful alliances. Jehoshaphat's reign in Judah coincided with the reigns of Ahab, Ahaziah and Jehoram in Israel. Ahab was the worst king Israel ever had (**I Kings 16:30-33**). His sons were also wicked idolaters. Several times Jehoshaphat made alliances with these wicked kings.
  - C. **II Chronicles 18:1** describes a marriage alliance Jehoshaphat made. His son, Jehoram, married Ahab's daughter, Athaliah (cf. **II Chronicles 21:5-6, 22:2**). In **II Chronicles 18:3**, Jehoshaphat allied with Ahab in war. In **II Chronicles 20:35**, Jehoshaphat allied with Ahaziah in business.
  - D. Jehoshaphat was a good man. He was a good king. He was a faithful servant. But for some reason, when it came to this issue of alliances, he kept making bad choices. In the end, he learned (**I Kings 22:49**). Yet, despite all this. His bad choices came back to haunt him.
- II. Our choices will affect our lives.
  - A. Despite Jehoshaphat's good life, he still had to face consequences in his own life. For instance, the war alliance he made with Ahab to go up against Ramoth-Gilead ended in defeat (**II Chronicles 18:28-34**) and Jehoshaphat was rebuked by Jehu the son of Hanani the seer.
  - B. In his business alliance with Ahaziah, Ahab's son, Jehoshaphat faced consequences. **II Chronicles 20:35-37** shows that Jehoshaphat lost his investment. Of course, this was the case that finally taught him to refrain from these alliances. **I Kings 22:49** is an attempt from Ahaziah to reinstate the business alliance but Jehoshaphat finally refused.
  - C. You and I are no different. Our choices have consequences. Making a bad choice is like picking up a snake by the tail. You picked up the harmless end, but with it comes the dangerous end. There is no use blaming God for the consequences we face. He is not obligated to remove consequences because we are good in other areas or because we have learned our lesson. Perhaps by grace we will at times escape some consequences, but God is not obligated to free us from them. When faced with consequences of your actions, do not look around for someone to blame, look at your own choices.
- III. Our choices will affect our family.
  - A. Typically, our choices are not made in a vacuum and the consequences are not given in a vacuum either. Most of the time, our unwise choices will also affect our families, our spouses and our children. We may complain that God allowed our family's lives to be ruined. But in the end, it comes to our choices and their consequences. Again consider the consequences of Jehoshaphat's choices.
  - B. By marrying Jehoram to Athaliah, Jehoshaphat affected the spiritual state of not only his son, but even his grandson. **II Chronicles 21:5-6** declares the wickedness of Jehoram was because of his connection with Ahab's family. **II Chronicles 22:2-4** says the same thing about Ahaziah.

- C. Additionally, Jehoshaphat's choice brought the deaths of the rest of his sons. In Jehoram's wickedness he killed all his brothers (**II Chronicles 21:4**). Even beyond that, Jehoshaphat's choice, brought death to all but one of his great-grandchildren through Ahaziah (**II Chronicles 22:10-12**). Talk about far reaching consequences. It all began with Jehoshaphat's bad choice.
  - D. We are no different. Our choices will affect our family for years and even generations.
- IV. Our choices will affect others.
- A. Jehoshaphat's choices affected numerous people. Consider the lives of the soldiers who died at Ramoth-Gilead (**II Chronicles 18:28-34**). Imagine how their families were affected and how they felt when they heard about Jehu's rebuke, knowing their loved ones would still be alive had Jehoshaphat chosen wisely.
  - B. Jehoshaphat's choice to ally himself in marriage with Ahab affected the entire nation for 14 years during the reigns of Jehoram, Ahaziah and Athaliah. All three were idolatrous, wicked rulers. By the end of this period a house had been built in order to worship Baal (**II Kings 11:18**). Additionally, the house of God had been defaced, disgraced and damaged (**II Chronicles 24:4, 7**). While the people made their own choices, we recognize they were greatly influenced by the example of their ruler. Though Jehoshaphat himself led the people to do right (**II Chronicles 17:6; 19:4**), his bad choices led the people into idolatry.
  - C. We cry that it is not fair that all these people suffer consequences because of one man's bad choices. But that is life. Our choices have consequences. We can defend ourselves saying that each person made his own choices. But, no doubt, we will be held accountable for the ill affects of our bad choices.
- V. Consider where your choices will lead and choose wisely.
- A. We are not kings as Jehoshaphat was. Perhaps our choices will not have as far a reach as his did. But nevertheless, our choices also have consequences. Our choices will bring consequences on us, on our families and on others. Those consequences may come quickly or they may come years down the road, but they will come. Whenever you pick up the snake's tail, you also pick up his head.
  - B. We can readily see Jehoshaphat's error. At times, Jehoshaphat put political concerns for his nation above the spiritual concerns for his family. The alliance with Ahab by allowing his son to marry Ahab's daughter was beyond doubt the worst decision of Jehoshaphat's life. It is evident that the political concerns to possibly reunite a divided kingdom outweighed the spiritual concerns of having his son marry the daughter of the most wicked king to reign in Israel. This choice had tremendous and terrible consequences. Our choices may not affect nations, but they will affect the spiritual status of our family.
  - C. Instead of complaining about the consequences of our own choices, we need to spend time thinking about the consequences of our choices before we make them. There are many mistakes made that common sense would overcome if people would just consider the consequences. When making a choice, don't think about the moment, think about the long term effects of that choice. Think about the consequences first and then you won't have to face them.

### **Conclusion:**

Every choice has a consequence. If you are not a Christian, you have a choice right now and what you choose will have consequences. You must choose whether you will obey God in baptism or whether you will spurn and reject God's offered salvation. Of course, the ultimate consequences of this choice regard eternal destiny. However, you may not realize that choosing not to obey has immediate consequences. No matter how much you claim you will obey some day, choosing not to today makes sin that much more of a habit for you. It makes rejection easier and easier and makes the devil's hold on you tighter and tighter. If you want good consequences, choose to submit to God right now and be baptized tonight for the forgiveness of your sins.